

## Legislative work—cont.'d

available for the Community Medical Centers Intermodal facility in Fresno, California, shall be made available for the City of Fresno for the same project. The availability of such funds for obligation shall be extended through fiscal year 2004.

### Business

#### Vehicle Repair

Under current law, vehicle manufacturers and others may unfairly restrict access to the information, parts, and tools necessary to accurately diagnose, repair, re-program or install automotive replacement parts. This forces consumers to use repair shops associated with the manufacturers and prevents independent, aftermarket competition for repair. Congressman Nunes co-sponsored H.R. 2735, "The Motor Vehicle Owners' Right to Repair Act," which will provide equity in the market by allowing consumers to choose independent repair shops for automotive work.

### Defense

#### Healthcare

Under current law, a soldier discharged from the hospital is required to reimburse the military for the food expenses he or she incurs while under medical care. Congressman Nunes co-sponsored H.R. 2998, which will end this practice. Mr. Nunes believes that heroes who have been injured in defense of our freedom should not be billed for their food while recovering in a hospital.

### Education

#### Minority Serving Institutions

Congressman Nunes helped introduce H.R. 3039, the Expanding Opportunities in Higher Education Act as an effort to increase access to post-secondary institutions for students of the San Joaquin Valley. This bill would expand opportunities in higher education for needy and non-traditional students, boost Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) and other Minority Serving Institutions, and simplify the federal student aid process for all students and families throughout the nation.

### Fire Fighting

The Forest Service has exhausted the fiscal year 2003 (FY03) fire suppression funds and has been forced, once again, into borrowing almost \$400 million

from other accounts. This includes fuel reduction accounts which would ironically reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfire. Considering this position, Rep. Nunes, along with a number of his colleagues, sent a letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Dennis Hastert and Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi urging them to quickly move an emergency funding supplementing the wildfire suppression budget of the Forest Service. With fires burning around the West, FY03 wildfire suppression money exhausted, and the relevant agencies aggressively borrowing from other program areas to absorb wildland firefighting expenses, there is a desperate need for Congress to promptly move a wildfire funding supplemental. With wildland firefighting costs approaching \$13 million a day, this borrowing total will very likely increase by at least another \$200 million before mother-nature brings an end to this fire season, bringing the borrowing total to in excess of \$600 million for the current fiscal year.

